

Monday, September 15, 2008

From the Coeur d'Alene Press

- District 4 candidates debate at forum

From the Spokesman-Review

- NIC OKs new alcohol policy
- Back in school but still enjoying summer
- In brief: UI reports increase in enrollment
- End the delays (editorial)

From the Moscow Pullman Daily News (password required)

- Next steps for UI's hiring 'pause' are unclear

From the Lewiston Tribune (password required)

- THE SPIRIT OF LEARNING
- New nursing building at LCSC is ahead of schedule

From the Idaho-Press Tribune, Nampa

- Nursing building ahead of schedule
- Editorial on schools budget based on false data

From the Idaho Statesman

- Idaho universities receive research grant
- N. Idaho nursing building ahead of schedule
- State program can help you save for your kid's college

From the Twin Falls Times-News

- Jump start on college

From the Idaho State Journal (password Required)

- Dress, dance standards at school can serve purpose

From the Idaho Falls Post Register (password required)

- Transforming education

FROM THE COEUR D'ALENE PRESS

District 4 candidates debate at forum

Posted: Sunday, Sep 14, 2008 - 08:36:35 pm PDT

COEUR d'ALENE -- Seated outside against a brick school building, District 4 representatives and Senate candidates discussed their positions at a forum hosted by the North Idaho Unitarian Universalist Church.

John Goedde, Ken Howard, Jeremy Boggess, Jim Hollingsworth, Tamara Lee Poelstra and George Sayler attended to discuss issues that focused heavily on education and taxes. Mike Wytychak, of the NIUU, moderated the forum at the Harding Family Center. Marge Chadderdon, who was unable to attend, had prepared a statement read by Bob Brown, also of the NIUU.

"One of the principles of our denomination is to promote the democratic process in our community, in our nation and world wide." said Wytychak.

Candidates each had a three-minute opening statement to introduce themselves, and briefly present their platforms. Education quickly became a key component of the forum, as Poelstra, a Democrat running for a House seat, referenced her children.

"I want to guarantee their future," she said. "I want to make North Idaho as enticing to them as it was to my husband and I."

Attorney Ken Howard, a Democrat facing incumbent Republican Senator John Goedde in the upcoming election, also touched on education.

"There is nothing more important than education," Howard said. "Education is a wellspring of everything that is important to us."

Goedde proposed to affect national education policy should he be re-elected.

"With my committee assignments at the national council of state legislatures this year, because of a change in administration, we have the greatest opportunity to influence federal education policy ... and I hope to have that opportunity," he said.

"As a former teacher, I believe that education has to be the No. 1 order for our community," said House hopeful Hollingsworth, a Republican. "I'll work with anyone who is interested to reduce the cost and improve the quality of education throughout the state," he said.

Following opening statements, Paula Neils, precinct chair of the Hauser Democratic Party, questioned where funds would come from if not from the tax payers.

Democratic third-term Rep. George Sayler suggested economic development.

"One of the ways to generate more revenue without generating more taxes is to create more revenue through economic growth, jobs and new businesses," he said.

Jeremy Boggess, an independent who will be facing Howard and Goedde in the Senate race, suggested eliminating wasteful spending by identifying programs that don't work.

"We need to look at rebudgeting and restructuring before we even consider raising or lowering taxes," he said. "Instead of burdening existing property tax payers, we need to give cities and counties the option of impact fees. It's important ... when development happens you're not paying for their infrastructure."

Ken Howard agreed with Boggess.

"... we can start to develop some impact fees and local option taxes so that when growth takes place ... that growth helps pay for itself ..." Howard said.

Hollingsworth, rebutted several of the candidates who had referenced eliminating tax exemptions.

"(If we) tax all the farm equipment, the price of wheat will go up, we'll pay more for food ... but at least we'll be happy we taxed someone ... so you haven't gained anything at all," he said.

Nancy Larson returned the forum to education by asking candidates to address the three most important components of teacher performance evaluations and pay for performance, an issue on the agenda for the upcoming legislative session.

"I believe that a program that is created by fellow peers ... is the best opportunity to evaluate and honor and respect these professionals," Poelstra said. "A very small part of this evaluation should be how the students are doing in the classroom."

Jodi Smith inquired how candidates intended to get services to special needs students without teachers becoming treatment providers.

Candidates suggested government corporation, parental responsibility as well as incorporating the private sector into the school system to accommodate special needs students.

"My philosophy has been that you need to treat everybody equally," Sayler said. "But treating everyone the same in not treating them equally, because we have different needs."

The final question came from Mary Lou Reed, who asked how the Senate contenders planned to address the swelling prison population without increasing tax burdens. Howard and Goedde agreed that reducing the number of prisoners was essential through education and finding alternative means of holding criminals accountable for their actions.

Closing statements provided a three-minute opportunity for candidates to reference platform issues not mentioned and ask for voters support.

FROM THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

NIC OKs new alcohol policy

Resident students must submit to test if they are suspected of drinking
September 13, 2008

A little alcohol-testing strip could cause some North Idaho College students a lot of problems this academic year – or it could clear them of all wrongdoing.

College administrators approved a new policy for students living in the residence hall, mandating that they submit to an immediate alcohol test, if they are suspected of drinking in the dormitory.

Two residence hall employees are authorized to give the tests, if students appear to be drunk or are behaving in an unusual or disruptive way that makes the employees suspect the students have been drinking.

The alcohol-testing strips can either be placed in a person's mouth or in a drink to test for the presence of alcohol.

"It can verify if a person has been drinking," said Residence Life Manager Paula Czirr, who first proposed the new policy.

Czirr had a positive experience with the strips at her previous job working at North Central Missouri College.

She's seen incidents at NIC where students have been fighting and smelled of alcohol, but denied drinking.

"We knew they had been drinking but we couldn't prove it," she said.

The strips will change that, Czirr said.

A box of 25 strips costs about \$47.

So far no NIC students have been tested using the strips.

All students were required to sign a form acknowledging and agreeing to the alcohol-testing policy.

Reina Lopez is in her second year living at the hall. She said she has mixed feelings about the policy.

"I think it depends on your perspective. Some people think it's an invasion of privacy. Others think it keeps us safe," she said.

Resident Kristen Sumers said she believes the policy is reasonable.

"It's only for people if you're causing trouble," Sumers said. "The people who are going to get in trouble are those who are totally out of control."

Alcohol is prohibited in NIC's residence hall even if the students are of legal drinking age.

Czirr said a first violation will put a resident on probation. A second offense means eviction from campus housing.

Still, administrators say they aren't going to be randomly testing students, and that someone who quietly has a beer in his or her room isn't the target of the new policy.

NIC Vice President of Student Services Eric Murray said he hopes the prospect of being subject to the test strips will act as a deterrent to students thinking about drinking.

"Students know they can't get away with lying anymore," Murray said.

He added that he believes the policy is reasonable.

"It's very clear these tests will only be for in-house disciplinary use. They won't be sent to the police," Murray said. "When you live on campus, you agree to the policies."

Back in school but still enjoying summer

September 13, 2008

The day seemed a lot like summer vacation: Ice cream, hiking, a visit to the library and swimming in Lake Coeur d'Alene.

On the last day of the first week of school, fifth-graders from Sorensen Magnet School did all of those things.

"We're just having fun," teacher David Groth said as students stripped down to swim suits and laid out beach towels on the warm sand of City Beach.

On Tubbs Hill, students shared essays they'd written about what they had done over summer break. During a visit to the new Coeur d'Alene Public Library, students received a tour and, for those who didn't already have one, library cards.

The day included some juggling and dessert before the trek to the beach after school.

"We're trying to build a little sense of community and enjoy the beautiful place where we live," Groth said. "We're here today to catch one of the last times of summer."

For students, having the opportunity to have fun and enjoy a little sunshine in a waning summer was a good way to start the weekend.

A shivering and dripping-wet Hanna Betts summed up the day in one word: Awesome.

"We went to Tubbs Hill which was really fun," classmate Evan Phau said. "I think it's great."

Waldorf School welcomes new teacher

Sandpoint's Waldorf School is starting the year with a new first-grade teacher.

Erin McNamara comes to Sandpoint from Red Lodge, Mont. She is married with two children who attend the Sandpoint Waldorf School. She was involved in a Waldorf initiative in Montana and has a degree in elementary education with a concentration in special education.

For information on the Sandpoint Waldorf School, call 265-2683.

Slow down in school zones

Speeders in school zones will face stiffer fines under an Idaho law that went into effect July 1.

Speeds up to 15 mph over the posted speed limit will result in a \$116.50 ticket. Speeding more than 16 mph over the limit will cost \$140.

Law enforcement officers are conducting emphasis patrols in school zones during the first few weeks of school.

Projects completed during summer break

The Coeur d'Alene School District completed several school projects during the summer months, from a new coat of paint at Fernan Elementary to a new roof at Borah Elementary and new science labs at both of the district's high schools.

The district also painted fresh stripes in parking lots and added \$145,000 worth of insulation throughout the district.

One of the district's goals this year is to improve air quality. Maintenance Director Bryan Martin said the district is also working to be more "green" in the cleaning products used.

Long-range planning adds members

The Coeur d'Alene School District's Long-Range Planning committee is adding six new members: Marcello Conigliaro, Tim Skelton, Patricia House, Guy DeGarmo, Roger Snyder and Angie Phillips. Alternates are Renata Moon, Gregory Peak and Christos Fillios.

The committee is an advisory group that reviews the long-range plans, programs and facilities in the district and recommends updates and modifications to the district's plans.

In brief: UI reports increase in enrollment

September 14, 2008

The University of Idaho appears to have rebounded from a five-year enrollment slump with an aggressive recruitment plan and amped up efforts to attract high school students.

The university has spent about \$1.8 million during the past two years to revamp its image and draw more students to the Moscow campus with a campaign that has included flashy brochures and advertisements.

"We're starting to see the fruits of the effort," said Wendy Shattuck, assistant vice president for communication at the university.

Student enrollment for the fall semester has increased for the first time since 2003, according to enrollment figures released last week. The university now has 11,791 students statewide, a 1.3 increase from the 11,636 counted last fall.

After steady declines in fall enrollment since 2003 – the biggest drop at nearly 6 percent in 2006 – former university president Tim White had predicted the turnaround would begin this fall.

End the delays (editorial)

Our View: Education corridor needs board's full attention

September 14, 2008

Backers of Coeur d'Alene's long-envisioned higher education corridor must feel like they're playing a board game.

North Idaho College trustees authorize purchase of old DeArmond mill site: Move ahead one space.

Idaho Board of Education cancels meeting to consider University of Idaho's long-term lease on Harbor Center Building: You lose a turn.

The corridor, as imagined, would be a consolidated campus stretching north from NIC between the Spokane River and Northwest Boulevard. Students could get their educations from a consortium including NIC, Lewis-Clark State College and the University of Idaho. New buildings could go up to house expanded programs. Paths and retail space would appeal to students and community alike.

Acquiring the former mill site, a \$13.25 million property that developer Marshall Chesrown has offered to the city of Coeur d'Alene for \$10 million, has been described as the key to realizing the corridor project.

But there are other critical steps in this complicated enterprise. One is a lease that would assure the University of Idaho long-term use of the city's Harbor Center Building, which is at capacity with UI's current course offerings. A 99-year lease is available for \$1.3 million, but the Board of Education has to OK it, something it was hoped might happen at a special meeting on Tuesday.

That meeting is now off, however. Why is a little unclear.

The Sept. 16 meeting was set up after the item was scrubbed from the board's June agenda, but enough members reportedly now have scheduling conflicts that there would have been only a bare quorum.

And even though the board now has a master plan and a favorable economic feasibility report that weren't available in June, some board members are still seeking more information.

Former UI President Tim White, a corridor supporter, has departed, but that shouldn't pose a disruption. Interim President Steven B. Daley-Laursen is dean of the College of Natural Resources and no stranger to the university's interests, which for years have included securing long-term control over the Harbor Center facility.

No one is saying any of this should be seen as a threat to the corridor. But some anxiety would be understandable.

Six years ago, the Board of Education surprised many in Coeur d'Alene by declining to endorse the corridor concept. Three months ago, the board deferred the lease question until September, mostly to get some questions answered. Now the board has canceled the September meeting.

The delays are in sharp contrast with Coeur d'Alene Mayor Sandi Bloem's enthusiastic assessment that it's "the chance of a lifetime."

To relieve the uncertainty, the board needs to schedule a special meeting, give the proposed lease its full attention and do what it takes to move a worthy project toward the finish line.

FROM THE MOSCOW PULLMAN DAILY NEWS (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Next steps for UI's hiring 'pause' are unclear

Faculty uncertain but supportive of president's decision
By Halley Griffin, Daily News staff writer

Posted on: Saturday, September 13, 2008

Some University of Idaho faculty and staff are feeling uncertain about President Steven Daley-Laursen's announcement that the university will undergo a "strategic" restructuring and indefinite hiring "pause."

James Johnson, head of the university's plant, soil and entomological sciences department, said he believes the restructuring is a necessary and important step toward the future.

"It's a good thing, but it will definitely increase the stress level on campus," he said.

Daley-Laursen made the announcement Wednesday during a fall address to faculty, staff and students. He said he'd asked Provost Doug Baker to pause hiring this fall, and only positions deemed critical will be filled. Any money saved from keeping nonstrategic positions vacant will be used in other areas of the university.

Daley-Laursen said the university does not yet know what the criteria will be for determining which positions and areas are considered strategic.

"As time rolls along we'll have more information," he said.

Johnson said some faculty members are concerned about the lack of definite information, and there is speculation about departments' futures.

"We're definitely in suspense right now," he said.

School of Journalism and Mass Media Director Kenton Bird said he believes Daley-Laursen's plan is a prudent move. He's pleased that it's a "pause" rather than a "freeze," and that future hiring will have a multidisciplinary and strategic focus.

"But the other thing I might say about a pause is that it tends to be somewhat arbitrary," Bird said.

For example, he said, departments with a full complement of faculty aren't affected at all, while those that have had resignations or retirements will be somewhat disproportionately affected.

"It's just by chance that we had two openings last year that we were able to fill, as opposed to this year when we wouldn't be able to fill them," Bird said. "But I believe that's something that the president and provost will be working to address through the exemptions" to the pause.

College of Law Associated Dean Richard Seamon said he thinks there's been an overall positive reaction to the president's announcement, despite uncertainties about the process.

"I think on campus the president has a lot of credibility, and a lot of people are rooting for him," Seamon said. "Whatever the uncertainties are, I think there's a strong sense of giving him the benefit of the doubt."

The UI already may have a hiring pause model to follow. College of Education Dean Paul Rowland said his college put a hiring pause in effect last spring.

He said faculty in the College of Education formed a council that will continue to meet weekly through the fall semester to examine existing programs, future hires and how to best realize the college's vision statement.

The council's findings will be presented to education faculty and staff in January, and the college will move forward from there, he said. Hiring will be paused at least through the fall.

Rowland said he knew Daley-Laursen was aware of the program, but that he did not encourage him to do the same campuswide.

"I did it because it was the right thing at the right time for this college," Rowland said. "I guess I'm glad (Daley-Laursen) saw it as useful for the university."

FROM THE LEWISTON TRIBUNE (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

THE SPIRIT OF LEARNING

St. Mary's parish school in Moscow offers students an all-around education grounded solidly in faith

By Kerri Sandaine of the Tribune

Sunday, September 14, 2008

St Mary's parish school is on Monroe Street in Moscow.

Ursuline Academy was established in Moscow in 1908 and started in a farm house that was converted into a monastery.

MOSCOW - The timeless melody of children laughing, learning and playing drifted through the air like soft background music at the Ursuline Convent where Sister Dolores Helbling resides.

The 84-year-old nun smiled at the sound of happy chatter as she walked by the dining room, where preschoolers and kindergartners were nibbling on sandwiches and wiggling with barely restrained energy on the small chairs.

Across the street at St. Mary's Elementary School, the first- through sixth-grade classrooms were buzzing with activity and the playground was filled with children enjoying recess in the warm September sunshine.

"It is a delight to have them here," Sister Helbling said. "It makes me feel young again to watch them play out in the yard."

School kids have been part of the scenery in this neighborhood since Sept. 14, 1908, when 22 youngsters answered roll call in a converted farmhouse at Howard and D streets.

Three nuns from the Midwest- Mother Mary Rose Galvin, Sister Paula Slevins and Sister Mary Carmel McCabe - had been asked by a Boise bishop to establish the Catholic school to serve the growing population on the Palouse. A century later, the school is thriving.

"They came to the wild West to meet a need, and they never went back to Ohio," said Sister Margaret Johnson, principal of St. Mary's School. "I'm sure they never dreamed of what it would become."

The women belonged to a Catholic religious order known as the Ursulines, which was founded in 1535 in Italy by St. Angela de Merici. The first school at the Moscow site was known as the Ursuline Academy, and that's where Sister Helbling graduated in 1941.

"We had an all-round education," she said. "We had a basketball team and a band, and the school had a family atmosphere."

The school was the magnet that drew her parents, Arthur and Clementine Helbling, to settle here in 1939 and establish a farm machinery business, she said. Five of the couple's eight children were still at home when they made the move from North Dakota.

"My father wanted his children to have a Catholic education," she said. "Moscow is the spot where he found what he was looking for."

Ursuline Academy was much more demanding than the small, rural school in North Dakota, Sister Helbling recalled. "We had Latin and chemistry here. The sisters were highly educated women. They had depth and polish. It was a cultured group of women."

They didn't call her a principal back then, but one of the founders, Sister McCabe, ran the school, she said. "She was unique. She had a kind heart, but it was a tough kind of love. She wasn't soft on people. She suffered from earaches, and we always knew if she was irritable, she was having an earache."

Moscow resident Kathy DeVoe, 60, is the great-niece of Sister McCabe and a former student. Four generations of her family are connected to St. Mary's.

"She was an amazing person," DeVoe said of her great-aunt. "She was very bright and she expected people to work hard in school. People would probably say she was extremely strict and they're right. She was a formidable lady. She expected people to do their best, to step up and play up."

Sister McCabe died May 1, 1969, exactly 60 years after she took her vows. She didn't share much about the early days or what it was like to launch a school so far from home, DeVoe said. "She kind of lived in the moment and for the future. She was a loving person, but she wasn't one to emote over you or talk about the past."

Ursuline Academy closed in 1956, and the school moved across the street with a new name, St. Mary's Parish School, as part of the St. Mary's Catholic Church. High school was offered until the 1950s, and junior high classes were in session until 1967.

DeVoe was a student at the school through eighth grade.

"It was fun. We had that old school in the beginning. It was a huge structure with lots of classrooms, an auditorium and gym. After the school and old convent were razed, we moved across the street to what my friends and I still call the new school, even though it was 50 years ago. It was a good way to grow up."

Sister Helbling moved back to Moscow almost three years ago. Shortly after graduating from Ursuline Academy, she entered religious life, and said she's never regretted it. She even remembers the exact spot where she made the final decision, near a tree on C Street that is still standing.

"God uses us. I just believe he leads us, even when we don't know where we're going or why."

She's come full circle now, and said the spirit of St. Angela de Merici still permeates the school that drew her family to the Palouse.

"Our founder believed our love for God should be so strong it overflows into our love for people. We are to be among the people, kind and caring. We should have open arms and take in people. That's our spirit. That's the spirit of St. Mary's."

New nursing building at LCSC is ahead of schedule

Officials credit planning for quick progress
Sunday, September 14, 2008

Construction workers swarm the many levels of Lewis-Clark State College's new Nursing/Health Sciences building at the Lewiston campus.

Even though Lewis-Clark State College's nursing-health sciences building has grown rapidly since its groundbreaking five months ago, Penny Dennis isn't counting her chickens just yet.

"That's a dangerous thing to say," Dennis said with a laugh after acknowledging the \$16 million project is three to four weeks ahead of schedule.

Dennis, the design-build manager for general contractor McAlvain Construction in Boise, said foresight makes all the difference in her business.

"It's preplanning," she said of getting ahead. "What we do isn't really rocket science. We try to see what's coming three weeks, not an hour, down the road."

But even the best planning can be derailed by the unforeseen, she hastened to add.

McAlvain does as much advance ordering and prefabrication of materials as it can, Dennis said by phone from Boise. For example, lighting systems and duct work are built ahead of time in off-site shops, then simply plugged in when the sections get to the job.

That helps keep the site uncrowded and uncluttered, she said, allowing workers the space they need.

Another thing that speeds up the construction process is the design-build process itself, where the builders, engineers and designers work closely together throughout the project, Dennis said.

"It takes advantage of everybody being on the same team."

The 59,000-square-foot building isn't closed to the weather yet, but its steel superstructure is largely completed and its roof is on.

There isn't a direct financial incentive, like an early completion bonus, for McAlvain to finish the project ahead of schedule. But Dennis said there are indirect benefits, like getting workers to other jobs waiting in the wings.

Being ahead of schedule means being ahead of budget, too. McAlvain has already returned \$55,000 to the project, which will be used to upgrade the building's security system and buy some additional nursing simulation equipment, Dennis said.

Chet Herbst, LCSC's financial vice president, said the same McAlvain design-build team recently completed a health sciences building for Eastern Idaho Technical College in Idaho Falls, another reason it is ahead of the curve.

Herbst said if the nursing building stays ahead of schedule, it will allow staff and faculty more time next summer to move in and get settled. Classes there are set to start in fall 2009.

Parking around the project has been an issue, with a staging area and construction workers' vehicles gobbling up some spaces. But Herbst said new spaces have helped alleviate the crunch.

"We expanded Fourth Street parking just in the nick of time, although we are tight," he said. "We're just barely keeping up."

The Legislature funded the LCSC nursing building and another at the College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls in response to an anticipated statewide shortage of nurses in the coming years.

Ground was broken on the CSI building in May.

FROM THE IDAHO-PRESS TRIBUNE, NAMPA

Nursing building ahead of schedule

LEWISTON, Idaho (AP) — An official in charge of building Lewis-Clark State College's \$16 million nursing-health sciences building says the project is about three to four weeks ahead of schedule.

Penny Dennis is the design-build manager for general contractor McAlvain Construction in Boise.

She says the 59,000-square-foot building isn't closed to weather yet but its steel superstructure is mostly finished and the roof is on.

She says being ahead of schedule means extra money to upgrade the building's security system and buy additional nurse training equipment.

Classes are scheduled to start in the building in fall 2009.

Editorial on schools budget based on false data

The Moscow Daily News published an editorial about my budget request for Idaho's public schools, which was based on incorrect data that was not first confirmed with me or my office. Let me take this opportunity to give the readers correct information so they can form an opinion based on accurate data.

The editorial stated: "Luna plans to ask for \$1.495 billion ... a whopping \$405 million increase over the 2006 fiscal year budget proposed by his predecessor, Marilyn Howard."

That is not true.

Yes, I have requested a 5.4 percent increase over the current year — nearly half of which will cover growth in the student population — but the majority of the "whopping" increase referenced in the editorial is not an actual increase in the funding that Idaho schools received.

That's because in August 2006, before I was elected as State Superintendent, the Idaho Legislature met for a special session and passed House Bill 1, which shifted local property taxes to the state general fund in an effort to relieve rising property taxes for many Idahoans. This shift automatically added about \$250 million to the public schools budget. While this change in law

appeared to increase the public schools budget, it did not give Idaho schools an additional \$250 million, as the editorial stated. It simply shifted the funding source from local property taxes to the state.

While making comparisons between me and my predecessor, the editorial also failed to mention that while I have requested a 5.4 percent increase for the upcoming year, my predecessor requested increases of 9.2 percent a year, on average.

Since I took office 20 months ago, I have strived to be fiscally responsible when it comes to funding education in Idaho because I know where the money comes from — hard-working taxpayers. As a small business owner, a former school board member and an Idaho taxpayer, I know each and every tax dollar is precious and limited. Whenever I request new funding, I ensure that it goes where we need it most: the classroom.

I have taken this approach at the State Department of Education. My staff and I have worked hard to cut administrative costs. Why? Because I strongly believe that every dollar saved at the administrative level is one more dollar we can put into the classroom.

I have not requested funding for any additional employee positions, but through efficiencies and savings, I found the money to create new positions, such as an Indian Education Coordinator, to provide more technical assistance to Idaho schools and students. We have also found money within the department to give schools the opportunity to try new and innovative programs, such as the First Move chess curriculum used in elementary schools, all without asking taxpayers for additional funding.

Because of this approach, we now have a responsible public schools budget that provides additional money for classroom supplies and materials, textbooks and remediation programs to help students who struggle academically. We also have a statewide Idaho Math Initiative that gives Idaho educators the tools they need to raise student achievement in math. We are developing a state longitudinal data system, which will provide parents, educators and policymakers with the current and accurate information needed to make better informed decisions in education on a daily basis.

This new budget request includes funding for a statewide dual credit program that will give all Idaho juniors and seniors the opportunity to take college or professional-technical courses while still in high school.

As State Superintendent, I cannot operate in a vacuum. I never craft a public schools budget without considering our state's economy. I recognize this will be a tight budget year, and knowing this, I have submitted a prudent and responsible budget request for Fiscal Year 2010 that provides the critical funding we need to improve student achievement across Idaho.

FROM THE IDAHO STATESMAN

Idaho universities receive research grant

Edition Date: 09/14/08

BOISE, Idaho — The National Science Foundation has awarded a five-year, \$15 million research grant to all three Idaho state universities to study the effects of climate change on water resources.

"The scientific debate is moving from whether climate change is occurring to what we will do about it," University of Idaho geography professor Von Walden, a lead researcher for the project, told The Spokesman-Review.

Announced Friday, the grant is Idaho's largest ever from the National Science Foundation.

The grant money will be used by the University of Idaho, Boise State University and Idaho State University to study the Snake River and Salmon River watersheds.

The Snake River watershed is a highly managed resource that is used for agriculture and by cities in southern Idaho.

The Salmon River Basin is on the opposite extreme, containing some of the most pristine wilderness in the continental U.S.

"It's probably a project that should have been initiated 25 years ago or longer, so it's long overdue," said Jean'ne Shreeve, a chemistry professor at the University of Idaho.

The money will help pay for 10 new faculty members at the three universities, as well as provide full-time research stipends to at least 20 graduate students.

Walden predicted that Idaho will get less snow in the next century as the climate changes and what had been snowstorms are instead rainstorms.

"Our snowpack will shrink, and the timing of our water will change," Walden said.

The studies are intended to examine how climate change might influence urban growth, water management and water rights, water availability, fire, insects and fisheries.

Scientists said research on the Snake River and Salmon River watershed could be applied to other river systems in the nation.

The grant money was obtained mainly through Idaho's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research.

Former state Sen. Laird Noh, R-Kimberly, is the vice-chairman of the committee that oversees the program.

"A lot of people, I think, don't understand or appreciate the quality of scientists we have in Idaho today as a result, in large part, of the EPSCoR program," he said.

Universities in other states also received grant money to study other aspects of climate change, including research on mountain snowpacks and research on desert environments.

N. Idaho nursing building ahead of schedule

ELSEWHERE

Edition Date: 09/14/08

LEWISTON, Idaho — An official in charge of building Lewis-Clark State College's \$16 million nursing-health sciences building says the project is about three to four weeks ahead of schedule.

Penny Dennis is the design-build manager for general contractor McAlvain Construction in Boise.

She says the 59,000-square-foot building isn't closed to weather yet but its steel superstructure is mostly finished and the roof is on.

She says being ahead of schedule means extra money to upgrade the building's security system and buy additional nurse training equipment.

Classes are scheduled to start in the building in fall 2009.

State program can help you save for your kid's college

Edition Date: 09/13/08

Gov. Butch Otter joined Treasurer Ron Crane Wednesday in proclaiming September "College Saving Month" in Idaho.

Crane used the occasion to remind parents of the benefits of IDeal - Idaho's state-sponsored savings plan.

"It's no secret that higher education is costly," Crane said. "College Saving Month is the perfect time to open an account and take advantage of the program's many benefits, including advantageous tax considerations. Even a little bit each year can add up by the time you child heads off to college."

Crane said the program's benefits include:

Tax-deferred asset growth, and tax-free withdrawals for qualified educational expenses.

Idaho taxpayers receive a state tax deduction of up to \$4,000 per year (\$8,000 if married and filing jointly).

Nine investment options through The Vanguard Group, with a low 0.75 percent annual asset-based fee.

A \$25 minimum initial investment and subsequent investments of \$15 through payroll deduction.

Around the clock access at www.idsaves.org, which allows contributors to make additional contributions, withdrawals, change investment options and manage bank information.

FROM THE TWIN FALLS TIMES-NEWS

Jump start on college

State looking to expand dual credit for high schools

High school students throughout the Magic Valley take advantage of dual credit courses to get a head start on their college education before graduation.

But students and their families must pay for the courses, an extra cost not included in high school registration fees. It's one of the primary obstacles for students interested in dual credit courses.

Before the Legislature convenes in 2009, state officials and educators in a task force will look for ways to start a statewide dual credit program that makes the courses more accessible to students. Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna has proposed \$3.5 million in his budget for fiscal year 2010 aimed at providing the finances for high school juniors and seniors to take up to six college-level credits each year.

The task force will present recommendations to the 2009 Legislature.

"Right now, there are dual credit opportunities, but students or their families have to pay for them," said Melissa McGrath, spokeswoman for the State Department of Education.

Areas that still need development include how the money would be divided and having a consistent program among the colleges and universities. By having a statewide program in place, high school students get an introduction to college courses and are encouraged to expand their education after graduation, McGrath said.

Interest in dual credit classes has grown in recent years throughout the Magic Valley. Enrollment in the courses offered through the College of Southern Idaho has grown from about 1,600 several years ago to 2,600 students at 40 high schools in the region, said John Miller, instructional dean responsible for off campus education of CSI.

While most of the courses are taught through teachers, the Internet has become a valuable tool for teaching the classes, said Miller, also a member of the task force. He said it's important for

the recommendations to help rural school districts that may lack the resources needed for providing the courses.

Wiley Dobbs, superintendent of Twin Falls School District, said dual credit courses are a good way for students to build up a semester of college credits.

"There are literally hundreds of students who are getting a jump start on their education," he said.

Jodie Mills, principal of Burley High School, said the school has increased its courses in the last couple years.

This year, for example, Burley High School added a human anatomy course and wants to eventually get a statistics class going for students. The school also offers classes in areas like math, science, reading and history.

One of the hindrances is paying more, Mills said.

"An additional cost sometimes deters them," she said.

Clark Muscat, principal of Jerome High School, said more students have been taking dual credit in the last several years as the classes have expanded.

He estimates that about 100 high school students - roughly 10 percent of the student body - take dual credit courses each year. Jerome High School has courses that include government, chemistry, physics and composition.

"Maybe over the last four or five years we're seeing more kids taking advantage of it," he said. "I think that's in part because more are being made available."

James Bostock, a counselor at Castleford School District, said that rural school districts like Castleford with small classes are sometimes affected by dual credit course requirements.

For example, the calculus course cannot be taught as part of a combined class covering trigonometry and calculus. That means a class is divided, putting a teacher in a class with just three students.

However, online courses through the Idaho Distance Learning Academy have helped the district provide a variety of subjects to students during the last three years, he said.

With online courses, one teacher can monitor a computer lab with students studying different courses, he said.

FROM THE IDAHO STATE JOURNAL (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Dress, dance standards at school can serve purpose

Some of the dance moves at Bountiful High School in Utah are too much for school officials. They have banned moves that are considered vulgar or inappropriate, including “freaking” or “grinding.”

The school also is setting standards for dress, including banning anything too tight, short or low-cut. Spaghetti straps on dresses are out, as are sheer fabrics.

Boys are prohibited from wearing slovenly clothes or fashions worn “for protest, defiance, dissent or displays obscene, illegal substances, or suggestive words or pictures.”

Good. Schools should not be a burlesque show.

Most parents and a good share of students probably applaud the strict regulations, and both must sign an agreement to follow the rules or be kicked out.

Here’s a question: Did the school administration run the proposed restrictions by the students for their reaction before imposing them? And how come cheerleaders can wear tank tops and short skirts to school and school events, if their uniforms run afoul of the rules for others?

Schools need rules, and good administrators to enforce them in order to provide an atmosphere to learn without distractions.

Bottom line is this, as articulated by student Sam Egbert: “The contract is a good policy because dances should be social events, not a hormone test.”

FROM THE IDAHO FALLS POST REGISTER (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Transforming education

Renovations at Hawthorne Elementary now complete

- Hawthorne Elementary School students who will be tour guides for tonight's open house make a practice run Friday afternoon as they prepare for the event. The tour will provide visitors with a look at the school's remodel and new addition.

Anne Seifert knew she had a long road ahead of her when she took over as Hawthorne Elementary School's principal in 2004.

Idaho Falls School District 91 was just beginning an extensive \$4 million process to modernize the 70-year-old building. Besides her regular principal duties, Siefert helped pick out the brick and moved teachers around as construction progressed throughout the building.

"I came in knowing the task I had of helping the shape of a new school," Siefert said.

Now four years and a complete overhaul later -- everything from the electrical system to classrooms were upgraded -- Hawthorne is showing the public how its money was spent. School officials are holding an open house today, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

Siefert is convinced they'll be surprised, especially those who haven't been there in a long while.

Gone are the vintage light fixtures and cracked windows.

Hawthorne's classrooms now have big-screen TVs, energy-efficient lighting, double pane windows and air-conditioning.

And building security has been upgraded with access control and surveillance.

Tyanna Bischoff and T.C. Brandstetter couldn't be more excited.

The two fifth-grade teachers combined classes in February when Hawthorne's renovations forced them to move into a portable classroom outside. It wasn't an ideal situation, but they also realized it was just a temporary situation.

"We knew there was a light at the end of the tunnel," Brandstetter said.

Sixth-grader Josh Esqueda has been attending Hawthorne since kindergarten and spent half of last year in a portable classroom.

"I think this is way better than last year," Esqueda said, adding that the big-screen TVs are his favorite part.

The district hopes to improve all of its schools, and Hawthorne is a model of what can be done.

It hired Trane Inc. for \$1.4 million to evaluate the schools and pinpoint how they could be made more energy efficient and better learning environments.

The final report, which should be released in January, will list improvements needed and how much they will cost. After that, school officials will have to decide how to pay for them, including whether to ask voters to OK a bond.

Officials are pushing to do the upgrades at once instead of renovating one school every two years because of the age of the buildings. Most of the schools are several decades old.

"That was not moving fast enough for our aging buildings," said Rene Miller, the district's spokeswoman. "Every school in the district will now be touched in some way."

Seifert knows how important those renovations can be and can't wait to show the public what a renovated school can be like.

"It's just neat to see a pile of rubble and stones turn into something great," she said. "This is a wonderful thing."

Cops and courts reporter Heather Wells can be reached at 542-6765.

Did you know?

The original Hawthorne School was built in 1937 and cost more than \$82,000. An addition was added in 1957.

Other meetings

Idaho Falls School District 91 is holding several meetings to educate the public about proposed school building upgrades. Here is the schedule:

6:30 p.m. Thursday -- Dora Erickson Elementary

7 p.m. Sept. 24 -- Theresa Bunker Elementary

7 p.m. Oct. 8 -- Edgemont Gardens Elementary

7 p.m. Oct. 15 -- Longfellow Elementary

7 p.m. Oct. 16 -- Clair E. Gale Junior High

7 p.m. Oct. 21 -- Eagle Rock Junior High

6:30 p.m. Oct. 22 -- Taylorview Junior High

7 p.m. Oct. 23 -- Ethel Boyes Elementary

When were the schools built?

Elementary:

Hawthorne: 1937

A.H. Bush: 1954

Dora Erickson: 1955

Linden Park: 1955

Longfellow: 1957

Edgemont: 1958

Temple View: 1958

Theresa Bunker: 1963

Ethel Boyes: 1965

Westside: 1979

Fox Hollow: 1991

Sunnyside: 1991

Junior High:

Clair E. Gale: 1961

Eagle Rock: 1974

Taylorview: 1991

High School:

Emerson: 1921

Idaho Falls: 1951

Skyline: 1968